XII. mery Jests, of the wyddow Edyth,

This lying widow, false and craftie,
Late i Englād, hath deceiued many:
Both men and women of euery degree,
Is wel of the Spirituall, as temporaltie
Lordes, Knights, and Gentlemen also:
Yemen, Groomes, & that not long ago,
For in the time of King Henry the eight
She hath vsed many a suttle sleight,
What with lieng, weepyng & laughyng
Dissemblyng, boastyng, and flatteryng,
As by this Booke hereafter doth appere
Who so list the matter now for to here:
No fayned Storyes, but matters in deed
Of.xii. of her Jestes, here may ye reede.
Now newly printed, this present yeare,
For such as delite, mery Jests for to here.

1573.

The Contentes of

of these .xii. mery Jestes folowyng.

The first mery Jest, declareth: how this faire and merye Wayden Edyth, was maryed to one Thomas Ellys, & how she ran away with another, by whom she had a bastard doughter and how she deceiued a Gentleman, bearynge him in hand, how her doughter was heire to faire Landes, and great Richesse.

¶ The second merye Jest: how this lying Edyth, made a pooze man to vnthatch his house, bearyng him in hand, that she wold couer it with Lead: & how she deceiued a Barbour, makyng him beleue she was a widow, and had great aboundance of Gooddes.

¶ The thyrd mery Jest: how this wydow Edyth, deceiued her Hoste at Hozmynger, & her Hoste at Brandonbery, and bozowed money of them both: and also one mayster Guy, of whome she bozowed iiii. Marks.

¶ The fourth mery Jest, how this wydow Edith deceiued a Doctoz of diuinitie, at S. Thomas of Akers in London, of .v. Nobles he layd out foz her, and how she gaue hym the slyp.

¶ The fifth merye Jest: how this wydow Edyth deceiued a man and his wife that were ryding on Pylgremage: of. iiii. Nobles ỳ they laid out foz her: & how she deceiued a Scriuener in Lõdon, whose name was W. Rowle.

¶ The first merye Jest: how this wydowe Edyth deceiued a Draper in Lõdon, of a new Gowne and a new Kyrtell: and how she sent hym for a Nest of Gobblets, & other Plate, to that Scriuener whome she had deceiued afore.

¶ The vii. mery Jest, how she deceiued a Seruãt of Sir Thomas Neuells, who in hope to haue her in Wariage, w al her great Richesse, kepte her company, tyl al his money was spent: and then she tooke her flight, and forsooke him.

¶ The eight mery Jest, how this wydow Edyth decepued a Seruant of the Bysshop of Rochesters, with her coggynge, and boastynge of her great Richesse: who likewise thought to haue had her in Waryage.

¶ The. ix. mery Jest: how she deceiued a Lord, lõdyme Earle of Trũdell: & how he sent. v. of his men seruantes & a vaadmaid, to here her company, & fetch her Doughter: who as she boasted, was an Heire of great Landes.

¶ The tenth merye Jest: how she deceiued three yong men of Chelley, that were seruantes to Syr Thomas Moze. and were all three suters vnto her for Waryage: and what mischaunce happened vnto her.

¶ The xi. mery Jest: how she deceiued three yong men of the Lord Legates Seruants. with her great liyng. crakyng & boastyng of her great Treasure and Jueiles.

¶ The

THE TABLE.

The .xii. merye Iest: how this wydow Edyth deceyued the good man of the three Cuppes in Holburne, and one John Cotes: and how they both ryd with her to S Albons to ouersee her houses & landes: and how thei were rewarded.

FINIS.

The Preface,

IN the Cittie of Excester by West a way
The tyme not passed hence many a day.
There dwelled a woman discrete and wise,
At the Signe of the Flowerdelyse.
Which had to name Joan Haukyn,
Discended he was of an honest line:
A Wan but of a meane stature,
Full well compact in every feature.
Broad he was from pine to pine,
And red in the face when he dranke wine:
Blacke was his haire, and hoked his nose,
And now and then, had the cough and the pose.
A sycknesse rayned vpon him aye,
Which troubled him sore night and daye:
Besyde the Cough, a bloudy flyx,
And ever among a deadly pyx.
Which brought him to his finall day
But ere that tyme, I will you say
He dyd espouse within that Countrie
In processe of yeares three wiues three:
Each after other in mirth and game,
Women of great substaunce and fame.
And namely the last wedded wyfe,
With whom he liued without en stryfe:
The space of full fyftene yeare,
By than: he was layd on a Beare.

Be

A Daughter he had within band of maryage,
By his last Wife, a worthy carryage:
Which named was Edyth at the Fontstone,
Of .y. women and a man, of blod and bone.
And when that her Father was layd in graue, ¶*
From fyre and water her to saue.
Her Mother aye dyd her busy cure,
As Mothers done by course of nature:
And vertuously as I haue hard say, ¶*
She brought vp her daughter night and day.
Charging her vpon her blessyng,
That she ne should medle with any thing:
That sowned vnto good huswyfry,
But aye study to forge and lye:
And countenaunce it right well therto, ¶*
In euery place where she dyd go.
This Childe obeyng her Mother deare,
Answered to her as you shall heare:
Mother she sayde, I am your Daughter,
I wyll endeuour my selfe there after:
While that I liue, I shall resigne ¶*
All such as pertayne to vertcous dicyplyne.
My study shalbe: how I may conclude
In things the people to delude:
¶ Thus is the Mother and Daughter agréd,
Now go sayd the Mother, God thée spéd:
Thomas Ellys loueth thée well perfay,
And woeth thée fast day by day:
His desyre is to haue thée to wyfe,
And to liue together all your lyfe.
Wed him hardely spare not a dele, ¶*
And take another, when he hath not his hele:
Daughter, make mery whiles thou may,
For this world wyll not last alway. ¶*
She promised her Mother to do full well,
Euery thing after her counsell.

¶FINIS.

¶Ye

The fyrste merye Iest:

declareth, how this faire & wel nurtured Wamsel Edyth, was maryed to one Thomas Ellys: and how she ran away with another, by whome she had a bastard Doughter: and how she deceyued a Gentleman, who (for her worthinesse) preferred her to Sir Thomas Dēnys, before whom she auouched her Doughter to be heire of faire landes.

Thomas Ellys she maryed for a yeare or two,
And then left hym, and away dyd go:
With a seruant of the Erle of Wylthyre,
The which payd her well her hyre.
By hym in aduoutry a childe she had,
Which dyed when it was but a Lad:
Than her Lemman cast her vp,
Go where she wold, gup queane gup:
She toke her way from thence ouer,
To a Towne called Indouer.
And there she made a Gentylman
Beleue that she was from hym gone,
To seeke her a frend, which in her right
Would defend her with mayne and might,
For great wrong she said she had:
And by mighty hand, was sore bestad:
And by mighty hand wrongfully reft
Both house and lande, and nothyng to her left,
And what so he were that of good Affection,
Wolde her helpe: the whole disposition
Of her onely Doughter he should haue,
Which is a great Heyre, God her saue:
This Gentilman went her right,
To Syr Thomas Dennis a worshipfull Knight
Inkorming

Informyng hym, how that it stood,
With this wydow, of gentle blood.
And how that she had a Doughter and Heire,
Tender of Age, goodly and fayre:
Which should inherite successiuely,
Both house and lande: and that good plentie.
And who that would helpe her to her ryght,
Should haue her Doughter day and nyght,
In honestie to vse: and her selfe both,
whiche thyng she bound with a great Othe.
¶ The Knight hearyng this euery dell,
Bad the gentylman, no longer to dwell,
But walke with her, and fet her Doughter,
And we shall commyn more hereafter.
Then they departed, and wandred right foorth,
Tyl they w̄ good speed, cam both to Mainsworth
And there the gentylman, full well did espie,
How the coggyng queane, most faisly dyd lye.
Then would he no lenger gene heede to her talke
But bad her be packyng w̄ a vengeance, & walke
And neuer to come in his sight any more.
Syr, no more I wyl not (quoth she) & god before.

The second mery Iest:

how this liynge Wydowe Edyth, made a poore man to vnthatch his House, and bore him in hand, she would bestow the coueryng of it with Lead: and how she deceiued a Barbour, makyng hym beleue she was a Wydowe, and had great abundance of Richesse.

FRom Mainsworth than, she tooke her way,
To kew: where thē, ẏ Lord Chamberlayn lay
And

And not far from his place, a good long space,
In a poore mans house lodged she was:
And was in good credence with him in deede,
She seing the house couered with reede:
Sayd to her Host vpon a day,
Mine Host (quod she) next to the hye way,
Take ye the thak of your house a downe,
It is a foule sight butryng on the towne:
Haue it away fast, leaue the Rafters bare,
And for a new couering take ye no care.
It shalbe hilled agayne ere it be long,
But loke ye wel that the Rafters be strong:
For I tell you they shall beare a great weight
Hoste (quod she) I sweare by this light:
I wyll haue that end couered with Lead,
Came neuer such a couering ouer thy head.
For none of thy kin I may say to thee,
It lyeth in my Store house, so mote I thee.
In fayre playne rolles new melt with glede,
Wyr Plommer bestowed it, I pray God hym spede
An honest man is he, and expert in that Art,
The selfe same day that he did depart
A way from my house I cannot tell where,
Many a fayre Noble with him he did bere.
Her Host when he had hard this tale,
With his hands his cap he gan avale:
And with his knees fiered, sayd vnto her thete
I cry you mercy Mistris, what do you here?
In this poore cotage which is not meete for you
Holde thy peace (quod she) for I wil not be kno
wnwhat I am as yet: and for consideration,
Go thou thy way and worke after the faction.

Is I haue sayd: & looke thou speke no worde
But is none of my Lords seruants at bord
With you (quod she) nor hawnte they not heare
It is lyke ẏ they should, for you haue good beere.
Yes (quod her hoste) now and then among,
My Lords Barbour is here, wͭ many a good song
I liuely yong man I tell you & full of corage,
Somtyme we haue here, our whit Wine wͭ vorag
And wafers pyping hot, out of the glede,
We chat and laugh it out, so God me spede:
Mistresse folke must nede be mery somtyme.
Hoste, ye say true by holy Saint Sym:
Quod the wydow, but let vs go to dinner,
It is .xii. of the cloke and somwhat ouer:
Into the house they go, and take refection,
And after they fell in further communication.
This yong mā ẏ barbour as he was accustomed
Came in sodenly, and biddeth them God spede:
Welcome my guest (quod ẏ good man of ẏ house)
How haue you done, since we eate the sowse:
The last night ye remember to bedward?
Tut and it were a stone neuer so hard
Quoth this barbour, it should disgest with me
For somtime when it wyll not forge,
I drinke a little lamp Oyle, & cast vp my gorge
And then forthwith, I am as hole as a trowt,
But Hoste, (quod he) what woman went out
At the Dore now: doe you know her well?
By gods body Thomas barbour, I shal thee tel
She is a widow of late come to towne,
But at al aduentures, I had leuer thā my gowne
Thou were sure to her, for she to me sayd,

She

She is worth a.M.li. and euery man payd
Beyde land, I cannot tell how mych,
The barbour gan to claw there it did not ych
Holde your pesce (quod he) she cõmeth in againe.
Mistresse sayd Thomas, wil it plese you to drink
And be ye merry, and vse not to think:
Me semeth, it becõmeth a wel fauoured wighe
And namely a woman to be glad and light.
Yong man (quod she) I thank God of his lone,
I haue no great cause to make any mone:
I knowledge this, that God hath indewed me
In hundred folde better than I am worthye:
And I pray to hym, that I neuer do the thing
Which is contrary, vnto his hye plesyng:
Gods blessig haue you (sayd Thomas barbour)
Forsooth ye speake lyke a good Cristian creature
But let vs leaue al this, & make some good cheare
Ales, kyll vs another pot with beere
Quod ỳ Barbour, & bid this gentilwomã welcõe
Mistrisse sayd ỳ goodwife, this is all & some,
ye be hartely welcome, euen at one worde
And therwith she drone ỳ Cat of the borde
And made rome for a dish or two more.
This wydow had vnder her chin, a sore
That Surgeons cal Noli me tangere,
which when the barbour did espye
He sayd Misterisse, may I be so bolde?
Nay yet I will not touch it, for my hand is colde
I pray you what is this, God saue the mark?
A thing (quod she) ỳ I wyll take no great cark,
For Surgery therto: for I was borne so,
I thank God whether I ryde or go:

It doth not greue me otherwise than you see
And it is no great blemysh, so mote I thee
Quod the Barbour, but a lytell eye soze:
Now Mistrisse, do ye gladly, I can no moze,
I trust we shall make better chere then this,
And then he began for to coll her and kysse:
So long they were dalliyng, both day and night
Cyll eche had others their trouth yplyght,
whiche was the same day, as I hard say,
That the thatch of the house was pulled away
And asked they were in holy churche,
where Christs workemen do wurche.
But when he by long communication,
Knew her falshod and dissimulation,
And after he perceiued, he was begyled,
In all the haste, his wife he exyled,
Ratyng her with termes somthyng rude,
And here of hym, I wyll conclude.

The thyrd merye Iest:

how this Wydow Edyth, decyued her Hoste at Hormynger, and her Hoste at Brandonsery, and borowed money of them both: and also, one Mayster Guy, of whom she borrowed, iiij. Marke.

This wydow then walked withouten fere,
Cyll that she came to Hormynger:
within two myles of S. Edmunds bery,
And there she abode, full iocunde and mery.

For

For the space fully of. vi. weekes day,:
And borrowed money there as she lay
Her old lyes she occupied styll.
The people gaue ccedence her vntyll.
At Thetford she sayd her stuffe lay,
Which false was proued vpon a day:
Than one master Lee committed her to ward
And little or nought she dyd it regard:
On the vi day after deliuered she was,
And at her owne lyberty to passe and repasse.
Then straight way she toke to Brandonfery,
In all her lyfe was she neuer so mery.
And there she borrowed of her Hoste,
Thirteene shillings: with mychle boste
Of her great substance, which she sayd she had;
To Bradefolde straight her Hoste she lad:
Where she sayde that she dwelled as than.
And when she came thyther, she fild him a can
Full with good Ale, and sayd he was welcome,
For his thirteene shillings, she had him bum
And laughed tyghe, no more could he haue.
An oth he sware so God hym saue:
The Justice should know of her deceyt,
A whore (quod he) heyt whore, heyt.
The Justice name was master Lee.
He sent her to Saint Edmonds berye,
And there in the Jayle halfe a yeare,
She continewed without good cheare.
But after she was deliuered out,
Upon a day without en doubt.
My Lorde Abbot commanded it should so bee,
When he was remembred of his charitye.

From thence she departed, & to Coulme she come
Wherwith her lyes all and some:
She sudiorned, and was at borde,
In an house of my Lord of Oxenforde
Wherin a seruant of his owne did dwell,
Which brewed bere: but none to sell,
The Brewer was called John Douchmon,
With whom. vi. dayes she dyd won:
Then after to Stretford at the bow
She repayred right as I trow,
And. vii. dayes there she abode:
Spreding her lyes all abrode.
In which tyme one Maister Gye,
Supposing nought that she did lye:
And trustyng of her to haue some good
Fowre Marks, by the swete roode
He lent her out of his purs anon,
And asked ay, when she wold gon
To the place where her goods were layd,
Which was at Barking (as she sayd)
Master Guy and his sister both,
To ride with her: they were not loth,
Ne grudged nothing, till they perceiued:
That she had them falsly deceiued
Than Master Guy with egre moode,
In the place there as they stoode:
Rait her both Kyrtle and gowne
And in her Peticote: to the Cowne
He sent her forth, Mahound her saue,
For his. iiii. Marks, no more could he haue.

¶ FINIS.

¶ The

THE VVIDDOVV EDITH.

The fourth merry Iest,

how this wyddow Edyth deceiued a Doctor of Diuynitie at S. Thomas of Akers in London of fiue Nobles that he lay out for her, and how she gaue him the slip.

TO Barkyng than she tooke her gate,
And lodged she was, at the Abbay yate:
For a day, or two, till she could prouide
A Gowne: and then wolde no lenger byde
In that quarter she thought it not best,
She deemd her prokyt, there did not rest.
Namely so neare the Nunnes nose,
In a morning she got her ouer the close:
West warde she yede the soth to saye,
And came to London that same daye
At Londonstone, she was hosted,
And there she prated and she bosted,
Of much fayre stuffe that she had,
The which stuffe she wolde be glad
For the loue of Christ to forsake.
And Mantle and Ring for to take:
She prayed her Hoste after a day or two,
To let his worke, and with her to go:
And bring her to some discrete man,
The which full well tell can:
What belongeth vnto that thing,
I meane the Mantle and the Ring:
Of him she sayd, she would confessed be,
Desiring the hole Trinitie:

To be her ayde in that foresayde mater,
Her Host brought her to S. Thomas of Aker:
And there she was prouided a none,
I tell you for trothe of such a one:
As knew by learning what was to do,
In such busynes, and what longeth therto.
A Doctor he was of hie deuinytie,
Called deuoute and ful of charitie:
A good publysher of Gods word,
In Church and Towne, and sitting at the Bord.
This world dispising night and day,
All mundayne glory, he wold saye
I wholy defye, and vtterly forsake,
The Deuyll (quod he) shall them al take:
That loueth these riches, and pomp temporall,
More then God that sent them all.
They shall neuer see their maker in the face:
With Sathan prepared is their place:
In the dark dongeon, in the region alow,
Of ioy and blis neuer for to know,
More sinfull liuyng was neuer vsed,
Than is now a dayes: no vice refused:
And worst of all, with vs of the Church,
That should teach other, how they should wurch,
And to shew them the way to heauens blisse,
Where our Sauiours dwelling is:
O God, why doe we not so?
Why doe we not let these Beneficies go?
Why do we retayne more then suffises?
Why do we not geue vnto them that cries?
Why fyll we our Bellyes? and let other go Woute
Why doe we not walke out al aboute?

Why

Why doe we not pray and watch all night?
Why doe we not our duty, as it is right?
Why doe we not let mens wiues alone?
And fylly poore wenches, making their mone
Why obserue we not: the precepts of God?
What yf we be punished with our owne rod?
Whom shall we erecte the fault vnto?
But to our selfes that can neuer say ho:
And one thing ther is, ẏ maketh my hart to blede
As oft as I think theron so god me spede
This coueitousnesse vsed, w̄ men of my facultye,
Oh, what meane they? Christs holy benedicitie,
Can they not be content w̄ iiii. no[illegible] fyue,
I trow they wold that no man should thriue:
But them selfes onely, an heauy case,
I know one man whersoeuer he was
That hath vi. benefices, and yet not content
And the least of them is .xx.li. rent:
I meane by the yeare, and the cure serued,
And no good is don, but all reserued:
It is maruell to see the vnsaciable mind,
That can neuer be ful fylled, before nor behind;
I assure you, I could be wel pleased
With iiii. such promocions: & hold me wel eased
As for a certayne time, tyl an other fall,
Welcome good wyfe, what say you to all
This world? now (quod he) haue done let see,
Sir sayd this Widow, vnder benedicitie
I haue for to speak if it lyke you to heare?
Come your wayes (quod he) & be of good cheare
Dispayre not what so euer the matter bee,
I shall go betwene the Feend and thee.

And eke discharge thee agayne our heauen king
If that you wyll doe after my teaching:
Wherfore begin ye in Christs holy name,
Breake your mind hardily, auoyde all shame.
She kneeled thē a down on her knees deuoutly
And tolde her confessour many a great lye:
And of the treasure that she had in store,
And when that she could tell no more,
Maister Doctor bad she should be mery
He sayd Ego absoluo te,
Forte sic, forte non.
And when that they had al done
Out of the Church they went both,
She promised him a Gowne of cloth:
Of Scarlet coulour very fine in grayne,
And an hoode thereto, to kepe him from the rayne
She promised him beside all that,
He should haue, ye mary algate:
Of Goblets no more but a nest,
And of other thynges she made him best.
So that he wolde, whyle she were in towne,
walke with her vp and downe:
And lay out mony alway as she neede,
And thrée times double so god her speede:
He sholde haue agayne within thrée dayes
Therin should be made no delayes.
Maister Doctor was well content,
And in the Citie before her he went:
So long it fell that he had out layd,
Of his owne money, and for her payd:
Fiue Nobles, if the reknyng be right:
And then aboue she stale away by night.

Maister

Walter Doctor thought great vnkindnes,
That he was so serued for his gentylnes:
But she is gone what remedy now,
His money shalbe payd hym, I wot neuer how:

¶ The fyfth mery Iest,

how this wydow deceyued a man & his wife that were goynge on pilgremage: who layd out for her lusty. Nobles: and how she deceiued a Scriuener in London, whose name was Rowse.

But more wyll I tel you in very deede,
Of this wydow, whom I pray god speede
Shortly after she walked by the Thems side
Not far from away where folke did ride:
Among all other a man and his wife,
She saw riding withouten stryfe,
Both being of meetly good age,
It semed that they were on pilgremage:
Toward Canterbery, or some other place,
Where as it pleased god of his grace:
But where ere they rid, or to what end,
Right soone she made them both discend:
Downe from their caple to the cold ground,
For she cared as she wold her selfe drownd:
This goodmans name, was called John Frank,
His wyfe Annes, a Dame full crank:
Both they came ronning in great hast,
Toward this wydow, full sore a gast:
Lest that she ere they come neare,
Wolde spill her selfe, she made such cheare:

 John

John Frank cryed, woman remember thee,
What intendest thou: aye benedicitie:
Thynk on God and banysh the fowle feend
Beware of dispayre, thy selfe not shend:
She stayed at that, and sighed sore,
And sayd blessed be you, I can no more:
For had ye not come the sooner, verely
I should haue ben damned perpetually.
But I pray you now, tel me what I shal doe
Quod this frank come away & with vs go
And tell vs further of your estate
Then (quod she) I haue great hate,
God I take to iudge for mine owne right,
My goods ar taken away by might:
Undone I am, standyng on this ground,
I am scarcely left worth. iiii hundreth pound,
Is in mouable substance, beside a lytell lande,
Whiche mine husbande left vnto my hand,
For she sayd, that her husbande was a great man
Of lande, and sayd that he was descended,
God assoyle his soule: quod she he was kind to me
And I trust, I quyt his kyndenes quod she)
For all folke saying, God forgeue them.
This Frank desyred her to walke with hym,
As farre as London, and he would do his payne,
That she might be restored agayne:
And the malefactors punished what soeuer they
Wydow dread ye nothyng, quod he, (be
But come on this way in the name of charitie,
And I shall bryng you where ye shall be at boorde
With a frende of myne, in an honest howse,
The good mannes sir name is called Rowse:

There

There ye shall be honestly intreated,
But where is the Stuffe wherof ye speaked?
At Kyngston, at Kyngston, then quod she
I care not muche for it, so mot I thee,
Ne for all this world, and therwith she gan wepe
This Frankes hart than in his body lepe,
This game thought he goeth fayre and well.
He requyred her no more to tell,
As at that tyme: but went foorthryght
And came to their lodgyng before nyght.
To Frankes frende, as I tolde you before,
A Scryuener he was, and wrought full sore,
To hym they were welcome and welcome agayn
And specially, whē Frank had could him certain
What woman she was, and of what substance.
Then she tould the Scryuener of the great dy-
That she was at for her ryght, (stance
And much wrong she had by meanes of a knight
Whiche shalbe nameles as yet. (quod she)
Tyll I see my tyme auenged for to bee.
God wyll sende me once a frende I truste
Before whiche tyme, I can take no rest,
Nother in body, nor in conscience.
Tary ye here, sayd ẏ Scryuener, go ye not hence
And we shall haue frendes ynow for money,
I wyll not sticke for that, truely quod she,
Howbeit my money is almost spent,
But I haue other thynges, whiche shalbe hent,
And money made therof me to defende,
I neuer had that Je well, so God me mende,
In all my lyfe, but could finde in myne hert,
In tyme of neede, therwith to depart.

At Kyngſton on Temmes I haue certayne Plate,
Xl. poundes wurthe for all this mortall hate.
And other thynges withall. els I be ſhrewe ſome
She deſyred her Hoſte to her for to come,
I haue quod ſhe to tell you in p taitle:
Steppe a lyteil apart, let your buſynes be
Into the ſhop they go out of the hall,
And than ſhe began for to tell hym all,
And more too by an hundreth lyes,
The Scryuener thanked her .xl. ſythes,
For ſhe had made to hym graunt
Of part of her Plate, wherof ſhe made vaunt.
And the keepyng of altogether he ſhuld haue
In Othe ſhe ſware, ſo God her ſaue
Of all her treaſure, ſhe cared not a myte,
So that ſhe might her enemyes acquyte.
But Hoſte quod ſhe, my friende leeke and dere,
I pray you of your good counſell here:
This wretched worlde I am mynded to forſake,
And chaſtytie for to avowe and take,
All my cauſes I am content to reſine
Into your handes, myne owne Hoſte myne,
Doo as ye lyſt, beſt good or vll,
ye ſhall haue all to order at your wyll:
The Scryuener ſayd, gramercy Maiſtreſſe,
For lothe quod he, ye intende well doubtleſſe,
If ye wyll do as ye ſay, I holde well withall
Than he called John franke out of the hall,
And made hym preuie vnto euery toyng.
She ſaid vnto thē both, that ſhe ought offeryng
To Sainct Sauiours, and ſhe would very fayne
Go pay her Offeryng, and then returne agayne.

And

And after she said; that she would desire
Her Hoste to wryte her Testament for hyre
And last wyll. whyle she were in good mynde,
So discretly that as for vnkinde,
Her frendes should not hold her another day,
whan that her presence is hence away.
The Scryuener & Frank both, praysed her gret-
For her good purpose: and said to her truely, (ly
To performe your Pylgremage, it is well done,
And I my selfe shall wayt you vpon
Quod John Franke, and eke I wyll prouyde,
A Mayden seruant, to walke by your side.
Toward Saynt Saxiours in haste she yede,
As ye haue heard beyng accompanied.
¶ Rowsys wynes best Kyrttyll and Gowne
She weared on her backe throw the towne,
Which was lent her of good affection,
Because that her owne was welnye done
Frank was her Amner, & layd out to the poore,
By the way as they went, & at the Church dore:
Of his owne proper money, which did amount
To the some of. ii. Marks, by true account.
And while they were forth this Rowse ẏ Scri-
Sent to Kingston for to enquyre (uener
Of her treasure there being in mew,
But in all the towne, she was not worth a q.
How be it, she was there, full well I know
The people laughed all on a row:
Home goeth the messenger and told in hast,
Unto the Scriuener all this quoynt cast:
By coks soule (quod he) it is not so I hope,
Els (quod the seruant) hang me with a rope.

For I haue enquyred substancyally
In euery place I tel you by and by
By our Lady masse then all is not right,
But whist no more, she wyll be heare to night
My colen Frank wyl not let her depart away,
Thou shalt heare other tidings to morow or day.
At fiue of the clocke in the after noone,
These Pilgrims came home ful soone:
And anon was layd to this widows charge,
With hye words out at large:
Her false deceipt from poynt to poynt
Than stode she in great disioynt,
And no reason could she aledge nor say,
For her excuse, but gan for to pray:
Nay then sayd ỹ Scriuener, god gelue me sorow,
How be it thou shalt tary heare tyl to morow
And then forth shalt thou, sterk belly naked,
With dogs arrand quen, thou shalt be bayted.
The Scriuener was halfe ashamed of chis,
And at .iii. of the cloke, when he rose to pisse
He put forth his gest on the backside,
Without companyon or any guide.
Her Gowne and her kyrtle he tooke away,
And Frank went to Fulham on the next day:
Deferring his pylgremage to Caunterbery
Full sad he was and nothyng merry:
His mony was gone and spent indede
The blessed Marter quit him his mede.

FINIS.

The

THE VVIDDOVV EDITH.

The syxth mery Iest,

how this wydow Edyth deceiued a Draper in London of a new Gowne: & a new Kyrtell, and how she sent him for a nest of Goblets to the Scriuener that she had deceiued afore.

HEre wyll I tary no lenger while
But to the wydow agayne my stile
I shal direct: and tell some deale more
Of her pastime, and God before.
In the Cittie she walked in her Peticote,
Yet at the last, acquayntaunce she gote
Out of her old walke, on the other side.
A Draper there was, that loued no pride:
To whom she preferred her accustomed craft
Lye after lye, and layd she was berakt:
A greate part of her goods, full wrongfully.
Alas (quod the Draper ful piteously)
It is ruth, to see you go so slender:
I shall mend it (quod she) when I come yender
To winsor (I trust) where my stuff is,
Gods curse haue they, that make me doe this.
Master mine (quod she) I pray you be not wroth
Might I be so bolde, as of your hole cloth
To desire you for to deliuer vnto me
As much as wyll suffyse (quod she)
To make a large Gowne, and a Kyrtell,
And I shall pay you therfore, full well:
When I come to winsor, after your owne price,
So that ye set not on me all the dice:

But let me haue a penyworth for a peny.
Mistresse sayd the Draper if there be any
ware in the Shop: that wyll doe you good
You shal haue it, I swere by the roode:
So that ye put me in good surette
For my money: for I know you not truely.
Syr sayd the wydow, if it be your pleasure:
To commaund your seruant to ride to Wynsore:
In my company within these .vi. dayes,
You shal haue your money without any delayes
And a pleasure withall, for your good wyll.
Forsooth sayd ỳ Draper, you speake good skyll
And shortly without any interogation,
He deliuered vnto her at the moton:
Of broade cloth .xiii. yardes ful wely mete
And eke as much as wolde make her a cote
A Kyrtell I wolde say of good wolsset,
And commanded his seruant for to beare it:
To the Taylour to be made in hast.
And on the .4. day after, whē she had toke repast
The Draper sent a Iurneyman of his
With her to Winsore, the way they did not mis.
A gardeuyaunce the seruant with him bare
Therin to bring thence all the short ware:
That she had promised the Draper before,
He should haue in keping, I can no more.
To winsore they came .ii. houres before night,
And at a dore off her horse down she light:
And in she goth, no more but for a countenaunce,
And came out agayne, saying vb a vengeaunce:
They must go by water and the way so fayre,
But I thynk they lacked horse to repayre.

The

The seruant abroade walkyng the horses,
Hard her wel, when she sayd al this:
No force (quod he) I shall haue the lesse to cary.
So you shal sayd she, nor ye nede not to tary.
But set vp your horse therfore anon,
In some Inne, and in the meane season
I shal hastely go wright a skrow,
To certyfie your master shortly as I trow.
The seruant to an Inne the horses had,
while she caused the letter to be made.
And then gaue it him, and bad him go to bed
To Colbroke: wher his horse better might be fed.
And syr she sayd, I thanke you for your payne,
your master wylbe pleased this letter whē he hath
A cup w ale at ẏ doore she made him drink. (laine
And thē hs rode to Colbroke, ere time was to wīk
And to London on ẏ morow, & deliuered his letter
Vnto the Draper that was his master
The letter bad that he sholde resorte
To a Scriuener, take hede what I reporte
He dwelleth in chepeside, and his name is Rouse
Vyd him deliuer you out of his house
By such a token, an hole nest of Godlets
A dosen of spoones, se there be no lets,
A standyng cup with a couer percell gilt.
Now thoght ẏ Draper, I haue in my hand the
I wyl plede in possessiō might I ẏ possed (wilt
To the Scriuener his seruant he sent w spede,
For this forsayd geare, and bid him not tary
This seruants name was called Harry.
His errand he sayeth vnto the Scriuener
And diligently this Rouse gaue an eare

From the begynnyng, markyng his tale well,
And when the Seruant had tolde euery dell,
The Scryuener sayd, I wyl delyuer none to thee
Go home and byd thy Maister come to mee:
I wyll so answere hym, that he shalbe content.
The Seruant in haste to his Maker went,
And tolde hym: that he must him selfe repayre,
For this Plate so costly and so fayre.
A, I see well quod the Draper, this man is no
Loe what it is, to put a chylde to scoole (foole,
To learne wisdome, while he is yong.
Upon his way, he walked so long,
Tyll he came thither, and gan to tell his tale.
Nethor quod ỳ Scriuener, let vs drynk som ale
And speake no more in this matter for shame,
For ye are begyled, and I am the same.
Nay by cockes body, I put you out of doubt,
Sayd the Draper, ye shall not laugh it out
With me after suche maner: for I wyll haue it in
Ye shal haue none of me by Christs crede (deed
Quod the Scriuener, get it where ye can,
But harken what I shall tell you man,
Let me rownd in your eare that no body know
For and if it be abroade yblow,
we shalbe laughed to scorne both,
wherfore Neyghbour, looke ye be not wroth:
She shewed you she had Plate, and so she told me
But all the good she hath is not wurth a peny.
I haue it proued, therfore leaue your sighyng,
This shall be good I tell you for our learnyng.
Good quod the Draper in the Deuylles name,
A vengeance lyght on her and open shame.

By

By the holy Masse quod he, I wil haue tde quean
Els, it shall cost me the labour of all my men,
For the space I tell you of this fortnyghts daye,
She shalbe punyshed truely, as I you say,
To the ensample of all other, & god grant me lyfe
Farewel neighbor, I wyl go dine with my wife.
Sayd the Draper sith it wyl be non other,
A dieu neighbor, and farewell quod the tother.
This Draper went him home in all the haste
And commanded his seruant to take repaste:
And after to ride as fast as he can,
To winsor and demaund for this woman:
And if it so betyde, thou canst her finde:
Take an officer and fast her bynde:
Se her bestowed, and then come and tell me,
And by my thyrst shortly wyl I see:
What the Law wil say to ẏ hore & theese both
I pray thee make spede, & take my boots of cloth:
Draw them on thy legs, for the way is depe,
The seruant in hast, vpon his horse lepe
And rode to winsor, by then it was night,
And at an Inne where he dyd alight:
He hard tell that the widow was gon
Where ne whether wist no man.

The seuenth mery Iest

who this wydow Edyth deceiued a seruant of Syr Thomas Neuelles, who in hope to haue her in maryage with all her great riches kepte her company tyll all his money was spent: and then she went to sæke her Frændes.

The seruant to London retourned agayne,
And on the next morow she was seene
in Southwark where she dyd abyde,
The space of. iii. dayes, and then away dyd ryde
with carryars into Suffex the sothe to say,
And at Towton she arryued vpon a day,
And there not farre from a knyghtsplace:
Nyne dayes her tarying was.
In whiche tyme a Seruyng man,
Hawnted that House now and than,
with whom she gan to curry fauell,
His Maister was Sir Thomas Neuell.
She promised hym to be his Spouse,
And desired him to ryde to her house:
To see her treasure, and also her store,
I wyll quod she sende hym before,
If that ye wyll tell me what tyme ye wyll fare,
Some of my frendes forsoth shalbe thare,
And eke my tenantes, as their dutie is.
Then he began her to halse and kysse,
Saying. hartroote, if it please you,
I am all redy, and it were euen now,
I wot well my Maister wyll not say me nay
And if that I be furth a Wonethes day
So that I tell hym where aboutes I am,
He wyll not be angry: but in Goddes name,
Peraduenture he wil say, where hast thou ben so
Than, and I make curtsie & hold my tong (long
He hath done with the twinklyng of an eye.
But after that I haue told hym truely,
That I ryde with you he wyl be wel content,
Once considering the cause ỹ fine of our intent.

Well

Well then quod she, on Saterday in ỳ morning
Let vs ryde forth our way fastyng
And at Senock there will we bayt,
I feare least my Gerle take some conceyt
Because that I am so long her fro,
It is, xvi. weekes and somwhat mo'
Sinc I garnished her with ỳ signe of the Crosse,
She learneth her boke, with the goodman Rosse
In Senock towne, not far from the Church
ye know him welynow, for he doth worch
And maketh Carpets now and than:
Trew you say (quod he) I know that man
Now in sooth I will go and ask my master leaue
And here is a Ring wyich I you geue,
Upon condition ye wot wel what:
Yes I warrant you quod she, I remember that
Then farewel honycombe til I se you againe,
God be with you, and shield you from the raine
Sayd the wydow, but loke that you tell,
Unto your master wisely and well:
All our forward, and leaue nothing behinde:
Yes, yes quod he, as ye shal wel finde:
To his master he goeth, as fast as he can,
And desired him of licence anon:
To ryde with this widow, a lytell way,
As far as her house, at S. Mary Stray:
And I trust in God omnipotent,
My labour in vayne, shal not be spent.
His master gaue him leaue for to ride,
Worke wisely (quod he) what so euer betide
And if that her daughter be borne to land,
Than I aduise thee to fall in hand:

With the child, and let the mother go.
By God sayd the seruant, and peraduenture so
I wyll yet doe, when I haue seene both:
And vpon the fryday, forth he goth:
Toward this widow foly, and amorous,
She was lodged in an honest mans house.
That night they made mery, with fyl ẏ cup, fil
And on the morow, they ride forth at their will.
To Senock they come, by than it was prime
And goeth to dinner all by tyme,
They made good cheare, and spared for no cost
The wydow of new gan for to bost.
But of her daughter, she spake no worde,
And when that taken vp was the borde:
And all payde for, that was come in,
Come hether (quod she) swete hart mine,
I requyre you that you wyll take the way,
As fast as ye can, to S. Mary Skray:
And demaunde there, for the wydows house
That lately was both wife and Spouse,
To such a man, whose soule god pardon,
And when that ye come, to the house anone:
ye shal say vnto my seruant there
I meane him that is charged with my gere,
And all my houshold stuffe in my absence,
That he ere euer ye depart from thence:
Shew you mine house round all about,
And eke my cõmodities, within and without
And when you haue viewed euery thing,
Than bid my seruant, without tarying:
Leade you fast into my closet ryght,
And doe vp the window, to let in the light.

Vnlock

Unlocke the dore, with this same key,
If I trusted you not I swere by my fay:
Ye should not come so neare my gromelseede,
And take no more than I you bede.
Within my closet ye shal anon finde
A little Casket that standeth al behinde
My ship Coffer downe iust by the wall,
Beare with you the Casket prety and small.
But I charge you take none other thing
For and you dor at my returning,
I shall know all: therfore now take heede
Mary sayd the yong man God forbede
Seing that ye do trust me so wel,
Go your wayes thē quod she: & here I wyl dwell,
Tyl ye come agayne, but looke ye make haste:
I wyll ride (quod he) euen all as fast
As my Geldyng can beare me away.
Forth he galopeth to saint Mary Skray
And there he inquered. as she hym dad
And anon perfect tidings he had
That he was begiled: for there was no man
Could tell any tidings of such a woman.
Then away rideth he as fast as he may,
And came to Senock at the next day.
But he could not come thyther to soone,
But ere euer that he came, the wydow was gone:
No body could tell whether she was yede.
Master Neuels seruant rid home w good spede.
Being in his minde, not well content
For some money he had her lent:
And payd for her cost, I cannot tell what
Yea, with a mischife I could not beware that

Quod he than: but yet no force let go
I wylbe aduised agayne or I doe so.

The eyght mery Iest,

how this wydow Edyth deceiued a seruant of the Bysshop of Rochesters wᵒ cogging and boast-yng of her great Richesse: who likewise thought to haue had her in mariage.

The wydow northward tooke her way,
And came to Rochester the next day:
And there within a little space,
To a yongman that seruant was
Unto the Bysshop in the Towne:
She promised him dale and downe
On that condition he wolde her wed.
And keepe her company at boord & in bed:
This yongman was glad and light,
Now thought he I shalbe made a knight:
By the meanes of this gentlewomans store,
Gramercy fortune I can no more:
He permytted in hast to be assembled,
With her at the church and there resembled:
Or ioyned in one flesh, that is dying.
And two soules euermore liuyng.
Good cheare he made her in her Inne,
And eke he would not neuer blinne
Tyl he he had brought her to his Lorde,
Before whom they were at accorde
Upon a condition maryed to be,
Which condition was it that she.

Could

Could perfoꝛme all that she had sayd
He wolde then marry her, it should not be delayd
Here vpon they departed and foꝛth went.
On the moꝛow my Loꝛde foꝛ her sent.
To dyne with him and to commen further,
Then was she gone: but when and whether
No wyght any woꝛde of her could tell,
But yet she walked to my Loꝛde of Arundell.

The nynth mery Jest,

how this wydow Edyth decepued a Loꝛde, somtime Earle of Arundell: and how he sent fiue of his men seruantes and a handmayden to beare her company, and fetch her daughter who as she boasted was Heyꝛe of great Landes.

AND there anon she tould the Earle,
That she had a daughter a little gerle:
which was boꝛne to be Heyꝛe
To great inheritaunce & lands good and fayꝛe
And mouable substance not a lyte,
If it please God her to respyte.
And graunt her lyfe tyll she succede,
Her elders alyue: of whose lede
She is issued by lyneall dissent.
And eke she sayd oꝛ that she went,
That her daughter should holde land
Hereafter when it commeth to her hand,
Of that Earle and pay hym rent,
wherfoꝛe she sayd that she was content:
His Loꝛdship should haue her to dispose
And mary her as him best suppose.

Unto gentylman Yeman or Grome
She wold haue her daughter come:
If it pleased his Lordship it should so be?
She wold fetch her into that contrie.
The Earle was contented it should be so,
And bad his seruants for to go
That is to say, to the number of fiue,
And redy make them bliue:
To wayt on this gentil woā & bring her thither
She her selfe could not tell whether
Notwithstanding she did say,
That her housshold was at Foots Scray:
Where she retayned great famely.
As they shall well find syketly,
At their repayre, and God before.
And foorth they ride without more:
She was accompayned as I haue sayd,
With fiue yemen and a Mayde.
And all they woed as they rode,
Each to him selfe at large abrode:
One sheweth his lustynes & mastery,
An other taketh vp his horse on hye
The thyrd sayd that he had treasure in store
The fourth sayd that he had mychle more.
The fyft was a man of few words
At the last he sayd, a straw for your hoords,
Paraduenture he is here that saith not all,
That somwhat could say, if nede should fall,
Be mery Mydow, then (quod he)
And cast a Sheps eyeonce on me:
For though that I ride pensiue and styll,
Perhaps yet I could satisfy your wyll.

As well as some other, though I cry not out
But all this while she cast about
How she might conuentently steale them fro,
But at a woods side it happened so:
A layre house there was which she sayd
Her husband bought it and for it payd.
Two yeares before he let his life,
And she was now in wilfull stryfe:
For the sayd house and lands withall
And sues she was in Westmynster hall.
Great thought she tooke for a freend,
That in her right would her defend.
One of the company that hard this,
Fayned him to light downe to pis:
Purposedly for to go to enquyre
Of this matter to know yf that it were
As she had sayd, or els that she lyed.
To the house he goeth and there he tryed,
That she was false and a naughty queane:
In all England not worth a beane.
when he hard this he galoped fast,
His company he ouer toke at the last.
And declared vnto them from poynt to poynt
Then all their loue, was sodenly quoynt
They light doune all by one accorde
Vnto wyle when they had rode
And stripped her out of her array
Walke hore they all gan say:
Home agayne they toke the way.
And yet one repayred to Foots Seray.
There she abode a certayne season,
The next house vnto one maister Heron.

A Gowne and a Kyrtle there she dyd hyre.
Of a poore woman to were to a fayre
Kept there besides vpon an holy day:
Fayne she wolde haue made her selfe gay.
At the forsayd fayre to haue be solde
If any man wold be so bolde,
Without examynation for to alighe.
And when that she was out of sight,
She got her away a great pace.
Then came she to Croyden there as she was,
Continewing for the space of a wook
Duryng the which time a poore Cook.
There dwellyng she dyd begile,
And borowed of him in that while
Fiue shillings in Groats and pence.
And then prtuely she stale away from thence.
Then she came to Eltham the right way.
Where she rested her three weekes a day:
And dyd nothyng but ay enquere
Of Gentlemen dwelling here and there
And when she saw her time on an holy day,
She walked to a Thorp called Baterſay:
And on the next day after, she tooke a wherry.
And ouer Thames she was rowed ful merry.

The tenth mery Iest,

how this Wydow Edyth deceiued three yong men of Chelsay that were seruants to syr Thomas More, and were all three suters vnto her for Maryage: and what mischaunce happened vnto her.

THE VVIDDOVV EDITH.

AT Chelsay was her ariuall,
Where she had best cheare of all:
In the house of syr Thomas Moze
After that she had tolde of her stoze
And of her hauyour and credence eke,
There was nothing foz her to seeke
That could make her mery other euyn oz mozow
I pzay to God now geue her sozow.
At Eltham she sayd that she dyd dwell,
And of her substance there she gan to tell:
Two wolsted Lomes she had by her say,
And two Mills that went night and day:
A Beere bzewhouse in which euery week once
Twenty quarters were bzewed al at once,
Fowze Plowes she kept, the earth to cultiue,
And .xb. great knaues to help her to thziue.
Seauen women seruants ỹ wull to spin & carde,
And to mylke the kyne abzoad in the yarde
She recounted her family & housholde so great,
That thzee yong men she cast in a heat
Which seruants were in the same place,
And all they woed her a good pace.
By meanes I tel you and by bzocage,
They sware they wolde be all her owne page:
One of them had to name Thomas Croxton,
And seruant he was to master Elengton
A man I tell you in whom dame nature,
Had don her part as in stature:
He was mighty chyned, with boanes stronge,
Shoulders bzoade, and armes longe.
Very actiue and apt to euery thyng,
Able to serue any Pzynce oz kyng.

As for his person and conditions withall
But there is a poynt least that for parciall
I should be holden: because he is my frend
Wherfore of his prayse here I make an end:
And somwhat I will tel of his woyng.
To his master & mistris, he was gretly beholdig
For busy sute they made night and day,
In his cause if I shall the sooth say:
And he him selfe was full seruiseable,
To this wydow at dinner and at the table:
And eke at supper he stoode ay at her back,
So neare that and if she had let a crack.
Neuer so styll he must haue had knowledge,
But all is honycombe he was in such dotage
Wherin a little whtle, I let him dwell,
And of the seconde woer I shall you tell.
Which had to name Thomas Arthur,
And seruant he was to master Roper.
A proper man neither to hye nor to low,
But Dame nature sothely as I trow:
Referred his gift vnto Dame grace,
Desiring her to consider the case
Concerning this man, and that she wolde
Indew him with verteous maners manifolde
And no doubt she was therin nothing slacke
Peace no more he standeth at my backe.
And yf he here me praise him, he wil wene I flat-
Therfore I wyl resort to former matter. (ter,
And tell of his woyng partly as it was,
And what spechfolke he had by gods grace.
His owne Master and Mistris also,
With other beside, I cannot tel who.

That

That laboured for him incessantly
And his owne selfe I tel you truly:
Was not neligent ne lost no time,
But gaue attendaunce from morning to prime,
And the after none with part of the night,
In her chamber the candels he did light:
And tymbred her fyres in the chymney,
And can ye finde in your hart he wold say,
To loue me swete hart best of all:
Yes quod she, but I wyll not tell you all,
What my hart thinketh as now,
But Thomas against to morow I pray you
That you wyll get you leaue to ryde with me,
As far as Braynford and there ye shall se
Some money receyued els it is yll,
But I wold we had one that this cup wold fil,
With Walmesey ỹ we might drink to bed ward
Whip quod Thomas and got him dawnward
And commeth agayne with the cup full,
Drink Mydow quod he a good pull
And when ye see your time get you to rest
He haue you in his keping ỹ may keepe you best,
Adew quod she, and farewell till to morow,
Here is good Walmesey els god gene me sorow.
On the next day Thomas rode w̄ this mydow,
As far as Braynford and I shall tel you how:
And what chere they made by ỹ way as they rod
Thomas right well his horse bestrode
A full fayre styrrop out at the long.
His horse was a beast goodly and strong:
And beare them both easely away,
And styll wolde stand while Thomas did say

Let me kis you darling, turne your face hether
Be it quod she, ere that we wend farther:
And thus the passe the time as they ride
To Braynford where they did not long abyde:
For shortly to Thomas she gan then tell,
Her debtour was gon to Kingston to dwel.
Thomas began for to muse of the matter,
And there then priuely he dyd inquere:
Of the goodman of ỹ houle wher his horse stoode
Which knew her right well & ware by ỹ roode
She lied in euery thing that she dyd say,
Then quod Thomas to him selfe a syra, a syra.
Is this the matter in very deede:
Homeward he caryed her with good speede,
To Chelsay againe where she was bred
As she was before and holden excused:
Thomas kept al this within his owne brest
Because his fellows should not at him iest.
And in her chamber the next night folowing
There was the reuell and the gossupping
The generall bumming as Warget Giggs sayde
Euery body laughed, and was well apayde:
Two of her woers being there present.
Thomas Arthur when he saw his time went
And sate him downe in a chayre solemply
And said nothing but now and then an eye:
He cast at his loue, as she stoode at the Cuboard,
When she perceiued she spake nere a word.
But stept vnto him and kissed him sweet,
Saying how is it w you, I pray you let me weet.
Thomas answered on this world I think
Cut a straw quod she, take the cup and drink.

Therwith

Therwith she imbraced him be mery sweet hart
She turned her arse in his lap, & let a great fart.
And I loued you not (quod she) I wold not geue you
Ya ha quod Tomas ye be a mery one twis (this
They laughed on a row ỳ som of them shoke,
The Wydow desired ỳ court to be broke
And ech wight to his bed to repayre.
The morow was Sunday and the wether fayr.
This Wydow determined her selfe to walk,
As far as Halywell, for she hard men talke:
That there should be a sister that day professed,
And to offer with her she was disposed:
Desiring the yong Nunne wt her sisters all,
To pray for her to the hie God immortall
That it shal please him of his aboundant grace,
In the end of this world, ỳ away from his face:
She ne should be seperate in any wise,
To Holywell she walked and once or twise
She drank or she came there, for ỳ way was long
The Nuns in ỳ quyre had begon their song:
In the hye masse & Bels gyn to ryng.
When the wydow approched to make her offe-
After ỳ Gospel her purse she toke in hand: (ring
And serched therin, but nothin she fand.
Aside she cast her eye and anon was ware,
Of Thomas Croxton at Chelsay her first woer,
To whom she sayd I pray you lend me fast,
Some white mony that I might offer in hast,
Or els chaunge me a noble quod she anon
Thomas Croxton looked her vpon
And sayd sweet hart ye shal chaunge no Golde
At this time: I haue money inough, holde.

How much wyll stede you, say on, lets see.
Xii. pence I pray you, delyuer vnto me,
Quod she than, and see it be in Grotes,
For I wyll offer .xl. pence, because of reportes,
And I might once get home, I wold not care for
When she had offered the sooth to say, (money
Sye romed in the Cloyster too and fro,
Tyll a yong man saw where she dyd go,
And water Smyth was this yongmans name,
One of her wowers, and I might tell for shame,
I, thought Water, now here is good place,
To speake of my matter, and to shew the case
How it standeth with mee, and also to be playne.
Softly he walketh this wydow agayne
And first hayled her as him thought meete,
Then toke her in his armes and kissed her swete
She knew him wel inough for he was one of thē
That I told you before dwelt in Chelsay (three
This Water his tale gan for to tell
Wydow quod he take keepe and mark well,
What I shal to you say without dissimulation:
I can no lenger mew mine hartely affection.
Ne inclose the secrets of my trew minde,
But to you I must breke trusting ye wilbe hinde
Syrcūstance voyding because I cannot suiurne
Long with you at this time, but I must returne
From whence I come, therfore to you anon
Among all your suters I pretend to be one.
Now Wydow looke well vpon me quod he.
And yf you can finde in your hart to loue me:
As wel sweet darling as I loue you,
Than I trust there shalbe such leeds slow

Betwyxt

Betwyxt vs both that it shalbe principally
To Gods pleasaunce and to our comfort secondly
Then the wydow answered w a smiling chere
And sayd goodmā Water I pray you tel me vere
Whether ye meane good sadnes or els ỳ ye iest,
I thinke as I speake so god my soule rest.
Quod Water therfore shew vnto me
That I shalbe excepted, or els that I am not he
I am a yong woer and dare not speake for shame
But yet to loue vnloued ye know it is no game,
Troth ye say quod she, I affyrme the same
And if I loue you not agaī in faith I am to blāe
Whē I come nere to Chelsay ye shal wel find
That afore all other I beare you my good mynd
A Crucifyx quod she of the pure Golde
Which many a day hath remayned in my holde,
Ye shal haue it for a token and a remembrance.
Thā water stode on tipto & gan him self advance
I thank you quod he euen with all my hart,
He kissed her deliciously, and then dyd depart.
To Chelsay againe, she came the same night,
But thā ỳ world was chāgd al was cum to light
Her substance was knowne & her selfe also,
For Thomas Arthur ỳ day had ridden to & fro:
And tried her not worth the sleue lace of a gowne
In all England in Cittie nor yet in towne:
Than well away her dyet was chaunged
Her potage & eke her ale were well poudred
with an holsome influence that Surgeons call,
Powder Sinipart ỳ will make on cast his gall:
It made her stomake vnable to brooke any meate
Now was she cold and forthwith in an heate.

Her pulses beate, and her collour went and come
No merfell dyd she eate but now and then bum.
She was greatly mistempred, & far out of frame
All that late at Supper had good game
Her to behold, and they laught all aboute.
Quod she, for Goddes loue let me come out
Let me come let me come, for our Ladies sake,
My belly rumblyth, and my hart doth ake
In such wise, that I know I am but dead,
If I haue non ayre: ay good Lord my head.
But she was ay kept in, that she could not start
Till my Lady gan to haue pytie in her hart,
And for womans honestie, bad that she shuld ryse
But ere that tyme, I am sure twyse or thryse,
It knocked at the Doore to haue issued out,
But with great payne, she made it walke about.
When that she was vp, she got her foorth apace
And er she had walkt .xxx. fote, she marked a chase
And eftsones another, through the Hal as she yede
Her nose burst out also and gan for to bleede.
Into ỹ colehouse she goth, & there made a draght
Held her ay theron, till she had layde her laght.
And whē she was of her nest, one ỹ hight Browne
Cam rōnyng in his Dublet woute cote or Gowne
Saying Madame, Madame, by the mans bones
I feare me, least there be fyre among your coles,
Howbeit, I saw no lyght, but a stynkyng smoke:
O bone Deus quod my lady, get thee fast & looke
God shield and our lady, that any recheles wight
Bare thyder any Candel, this present night;
Go loke, go loke quod she in haste get thee hence.
Browne went him furth, & by the sufflemence.

He tryed that there was no materyall fyre,
He laughed & ſware by the ſoule of his Syre
That one word more he could not ſpeake for ſhame
Good night quod he, at the beſt is this game:
Soone after the wydow came forth well eaſed,
That Cony, ỳ cony quod ſhe, was not wel roſted:
That I eat at Halywell, but I haue made auoy-
The deuill go w all, & a vengeaunce, (dance
I ſhal mend now I truſt: & then ſhe went to bed:
Her lodging was chāged there, ỳ reſted her hed
But ſhe was in more honour, than euer ſhe was
Notwithſtādig her gown & kyrtle of her gore (afore
Was taken away and reſtored to the owner.
The maſtiff chaynes day & night ſhe did were
And wher gret Eſtats were chaynes about theyr
She had diſdayne to were thē on her legs (necks
But whether ſhe be content or diſpleaſed,
For the ſpace of three weeks ỳ chaynes ſhe wered
And after in a day at a gayle deliuery,
She was diſcharged being glad and mery.

The.xi. mery Jeſt, how

this wydow Edyth: deceyued three yongmen of the Lorde Legates ſeruants with her great lying crakyng and boaſtyng of her great treaſure and Juelles.

TO weſtminſter, ſhe walked after as I trow,
And in the houſe w the pie in ỳ wyndow:
She was lodged, but there was no place,
Long for to tary conſidering her caſe.

Gon was her money wel neare all
Shẽ had full sodenly a great fall
As ye haue hard before, but yet nothyng dismaid
On a day to her selfe thus she sayd:
What should I here dwell and no penny in purse
If I tarry any lenger I pray that gods curse
Lyght vpon me euen by and by.
Then away she got her and that hastely
And ere she had walked a forlong way or two
She had bethought her where for to go
Heauen kyng quod she full of grace
Why remembred not I my Lord Legats place
By God I must haue there, yet some good cheare
Alone wyll I go without any feare
And rushe into the porters lodge full right
And there demaund for such a knight:
That I know well is not there now.
I shal report in what maner and how
My landes be kept from me by strength,
Such a tale I wyll tell at length,
That some man wyll geue an eare I trow
And desire me further for to know.
To the Porters lodge she goeth a great pase,
And as she had deuised, opened the case.
The Porter asked, why she went so bare?
In sooth quod she, I take no great care,
How that I go, whyle my busynes last,
I trust it shalbe mended now in haste.
Than, in came a yoman that was called Shyre
And stood vpright, and warmed hym by the fyre,
Geuyng an eare alway now and than,
And at the last, he kept sooth lyke a man

Saying

Saying fayze mistresse, what is your sute?
If ye thinke it best: come tell me without
And for the good mind I beare to all wydowes
I promise you ere you go out of this house
ye shal haue friends and that without money,
Wherfore take ye no thought but be ay mery.
And while they were cõmonyng of this warke
A Yeman approched þ was called John Clarke:
And he demaunded what the matter was?
Gentle man quod she, thus standeth the case;
I am a poore wydow left all alone
And hether I am come to make my mone.
Great wrong I haue, as God well knoweth
For in all this world I ne oweth
Pound nor Noble that ought to be payd,
But of ten times so much I am delayd.
I pray to God once to send me an hed
That I may sleep at home in my bed:
For I am wery of this renning about,
And yet alway I stande in great doubt
Least that the bigger wyll eate the Been,
Gentylmen quod she, ye wot what I meane:
Therfore help me for your mothers blessyng
And ye shal haue golde & golde good sterlyng:
Further she saw comming to her ward,
The thyrd yeman called Thomas Aprichard:
which anon demanded what þ matter ment
John Clarke quickly by the hand him hent:
Led him apart, and tolde in his eare,
Seest thou quod he, this homely gere?
By gods lids she is a wydow & þ of gret substance
And mary she would, I know by her daltance

Peace quod Thomas, haue her to the wyne,
And let vs drawe cuttes, eyther thyne or myne,
So be it, sayd Clark and let vs no more talk
Wherto sayd he, wil it please you to walk
In to the towne: and drink a pynt of wine
And doubt ye not ye shall do wel and fine:
For and if that ye pretend title of right,
Ye shal haue them ẏ in your quarell wil fight
And nede be: but it shal not come therto.
Gentlemen quod she, I am pleased to go,
With you at this time trusting of your ayde
And one of you three, I shal make wel apayde
Who so euer he be and God before.
Master Clark tell me where ye were bore,
And yf ye wylbe a good husband so god me spede
And folow my counsell, ye shal haue no neede:
To none of your kyn, but ye shalbe able
To lend vnto him, Hall, Chamber and stable,
As he shalbe able to lend vnto you.
God thank you sayd Clark, but here is ẏ house
Wherin we wyl drink & make good chere. (now
Hostes quod he, fetch vs bread, ale and beere
And eke wine and that of the best,
Said Thomas Pritchard, for so god my soule rest
This night I am disposed to laugh it euen out
Be mery wydow and nothing doubt.
For he dwelleth not vnder our kings obeysance,
Shal do you wrong in England nor in Fraunce.
But all Thomas words little she did regard,
Her eye was euer to John Clark ward
To whom she sayd the selfe same tide,
Master Clark quod she, wyll ye to morow ride?

As

Aslar as Barking, ye shalhaue hozse of me,
And else a noble in your purse so mot I thee
And there nothing els shal ye do,
But se my folks and cattels also:
And then returne when ye shal se it good.
Quod John Clarke I shal by the rood:
But where standeth your hozse, let me ẏ know,
Ye is not far hence as I trow
Quod she: I shal tel you in the mozning,
Well then let vs drink in the euening:
Quod John Clark, for here is good drink indeede
And good meat also, I pray you widow keede.
The time they pas merely til ten of the clok
Yea, and I shal not lye, till after the first cok:
Then they departed and to their beds went,
Thomas apzichard payd for all that was spent.
John Clark in the mozning made him yare,
Thought he: now I wyll yander away fare
I lyke tyis gere euen very wesl.
Ye inquereth for ẏ wydow, but no man can tel
Where she is become, with walk qreane walk
Jhon Clark then fell into other talk
And let her go the feend be her gyde,
But here now I can not long abyde.
Considering her pastime in every place,
For if I shuld leaue off, it shuld deface
In a maner her booke, which were greae pitie
And ruth also, I swere by Saint Mauye
Wherfoze somewhat further of her I wyl wryte,
And without addition truely to indyte,

FINIS.

The

The, xii. mery Jest,

how this wydow Edyth deceyued the goodman of the three Cuppes in Holburne, and one John Cotes that ryd with her to Saint Albons to ouer see her lands and tenements, and how they were rewarded.

(flight
From Westminster to Holburne she flew at one
And at the signe of ye three cups she did alight
Trustyng there to season on her pray
For she had eaten no meat of all that day.
Fyrst she asked for the goodman of the Inne,
And as soone as she saw him, anon she did begin,
Go tell him a tale and neuer a true worde,
Host quod she, might I be with you at borde
For the space of eyght, or els nine dayes
And ye shal finde me honest at all assayes
Ful well I shall pay for all that I take,
O blessed Lady so mine head doth ake
I haue ron so fast that my winde is neare gone:
Mayd I pray you step to the dore anone
And looke yf ye may se fowr tall men:
With swords & buklers as fast as they may ren
They haue chased me all this long day,
And wyll not be answered for ought ye I can say,
I see well that she is best at ease.
That hath little or nought in this world to lese
All my trouble I may wyt a little substance
Which is my owne, it procureth me greuance
But my Hoste quod she, help me now,
I shall tell you in what maner and how.

The

The case standeth, and remedy is none:
But and if I be taken I must needes begone:
what betwixt ỹ kings seruãts & my lord Legats
I am so alayled ỹ I wot not whither to go (also
Diuers wold haue me but I am determined this
Neuer to be coupled to a Courtier iwis.
While that I liue, and god be my good Lorde
Her hoste desired her to sit downe at the borde
Be shal quod he, haue the best help that I can
And for your sake: I wold I were a single man.
Therwith he twinkled and lokèd ful narrow
And kissed her twise & chirked like a Sparow.
In sooth sayd she if there were an honest man:
Wise and toward I may say to you now
I could finde in my hart to make him a man.
And if euer I marry he shalbe such a one
As to loke for great goods I will not in seth
For I haue inow for him and me both.
And if that he be not to great a waster:
But I wyl none that shalbe called master.
These Roysters of the court no poynt towchon
My neboys when they com to make their mone
Desiring of reformation of things misused
Shal not stand caples i to him that is vsed
To lyg by my side, and to kis me in the night.
Nay, nay: I will none such by god almight.
But hoste quod she, against the next saterday
I pray you prouide me and if that ye may
Whatsoeuer they cost two men and two hors
For I must ride to S. Albons in maner perforce.
I haue ben long thence the worse huswife am I
But I trust I haue them there ỹ will loke & espy.

If any fault be and ſe it amended,
Mine houſes there be metely wel defended
I meane this, thy ſtand in good reperation
And my houſe at ỳ croſſe keyes is lyke ỳ factous
Of your houſe here, but ỳ it is much bigger
God haue mercy on the ſoule of my good father
He had great pleaſure there to lye.
And is the croſſe keyes yours, ſay ye truely?
Quod her hoſt: mary there is a fayre lodging
And a goodly backſide therunto belonging.
yea quod ſhe, I haue ther houſing s alſo good
In ỳ towne & nere by, worth .v. hundred pound.
And if it ſhould be ſolde to the valew.
And in Barnet the Inne repayred new
With the ſigne of ỳ Lyon is mine owne right
My father bought it of a good Knight
God remit their trelpas both twayne,
But I pray Chriſt graunt we haue no rayne
Againſt we ryde: for the way wyl be foule.
Her hoſt anſwerd and ſware by his ſoule,
I ſhal man you quod he, and againſt that tyde
Ere purvey an other that gladly will ryde:
Wayting vpon you and if that nede bee,
He ſhal ſtand in a mans ſtede to mot I thee.
Alſo you ſhal haue to your handmayd,
Mine owne deare doughter, as my wife layd:
Ride when pleaſe you, al things ſhalbe redy
I lack no more but a payre of Bootes truely.
Mine hoſt quod ſhe, care ye not for that
Take ye payne tyl ye come to Barnat,
And there ye ſhal haue choyce of twelue payre
Which I diſtrained for mine houſe there.

A tenanntry

A tenauntry I haue there in which did dwell.
A Sowter ỳ made Boots for to sell:
And shoes also full good and strong,
I may say to you he dwelled there so long
Tyll his hatre gan to grow throw his hoode,
And than when the false knaue vnderstoode
That I was at Otford away in kent,
Besy there prouing my husbands testament
He wolde haue stolne away by night,
But yet his purpose came to light.
It hapned so that a tenaunt of mine,
Was late in the euening milking of kine.
And saw mine horeson when he busked him fore-
with such trash as he had, & then hõward (ward
She her hied as fast as she may,
And told her husband to morow or day
Twyfeld wyl fleet and the rent is vnpayd:
Go & distrayne him, in hast she sayd:
In my maisters name: and so he dyd indede
Boots and Shoes I haue inow so God me spede
And other trumpery, I cannot tel what
But I wyl se when I com to Barnat.
Host quod she, I pray you let vs wel be horsed
For I haue ben many times troubled:
By the way as I haue ridden for lack of hors,
Her host answered geue ye no force
ye shal haue such that shal deare ye thorow
Wel then quod she, al is good inow,
At S. Albons I haue horse of mine owne.
The goodman than walked into the towne
And prouided her a seruant that was called
John Cotes, a man that neuer fayled:

Hys mayster, not maystrelle in tyme of neede.
On the day appointed, they ryde forth wt speed
And at their departyng, this wydow borowed
Upon her Hostelle, which she hartely desired
A Cap: an Hat, and three kerchieues therto
A cople of syluer pinnes, a payr of Hokes & no mo
Apace they ryde, tyll they come to Whetton,
And there gan to speake to them anon,
Hy frendes quod she, take keepe what I say,
I haue bethought me, rydyng by the way
That it is not best for vs this day,
To ryde through Barnet, & I shal tel you why:
One knaue or other wyll vs there espy,
I know that I am wayted for in the towne:
Wherfore by myne aduise, let vs light downe,
And bayt here, and rest a lytell whyle,
And then ye shall see vs them all begyle.
For when that we come to Barnet townes ende,
We shall there then spyte of the feende
Ryde in the Lane, on the backside.
I know the way, we shall neede no guyde:
And at the wyndmyl we shal come in our way a-
And than furthryght fayre and playne (gayne
Tyll that we come to Hatfield Parkepale:
And there I haue a Tenant that selleth Ale,
And a farme besides which yelds me by the yere
Thirteene pound: and when I come good there:
Hyne horsemeat & mans meat, & cost me nought
Hine husband when he died, for ỹ farme ought
Fortie Markes: but I thanke God now
Hy farmer may go both to Cart and Plow,
At his owne pleasure, and no man him warne,

Well

Wel then sayd Cotes, beside this barne,
Let vs now light and walk to our Inne
This Mayde here shal first beginne:
Lete downe quod he, & let me help your Misteris
Nay sayd the wydow I wil none of your seruice
At this tyme: I shal descend without assistance
The place wher they baited was not far thence
To the which they romed & made good chere
And when they had payd for bread ale & beere
And for other things, I cannot tell what,
The wydow departed from ỳ place there she sate,
And called for horse: let vs ryde now quod she.
I am well contented so mote I thee
Sayd her host: and Cotes agreed therto,
But hostes quod she, or euer that we go
Whan we be on horsback fyl a pint wt Malmsay,
And syns betwene you, looke that ye wel pay:
For euery thing, and that with the most,
I haue done sayd Cotes, whatsoeuer it cost
She is allowed after her owne price.
To horsback than, they yede at a trice,
And ridden forth til they came to Barnet.
Now friends quod she, I wyl algate
Leaue the towne as I told you before.
Cotes answered and a great oth swore
That he wold not ride out of his way,
Care ye not quod he, what folks say
And if that ye be knowne: what for that,
Put on your head this hood and your hat.
And eke this cloke about you, & if you doubt
Than and they gawren round about
Ye shal not be knowne of any maner wight

I pray you let vs ride for it draweth vnto night.
Tut quod she ye be a mery man,
Crow ye that my owne folli ne can
Know me: and if I be disguised
Yes I warant you ye shal heare it cryed: (Coles
If we ride through ỹ towne, for I shal tell thee
I haue them in my Inne and they se but my fote
They will know me, and what remedy then
I knows you wyll defend me lyke piety men,
Vnto your power: but what is one or tway
In comparison to fyre, if they mete in the way:
But seing ye wyll ieopard it geue me my cloke
Ride forth a pace and not once a side loke.
Whē we com againſt ỹ Lyon but bang down your
And geue me in my hands your beades (heads
I wyll occupy both my hart and eke my minde
The better assyſtance, I trust we shal finde.
Be but quod her host, how shal I do for my boots
I pray you that eyther I or els Coles
May ride for them, and gallop after in hast
I say quod she, tyll we be this towne past
We wyl not tarry for ought that may fall
Worse arayed then you are, ye cannot be at all
At S. Albons we shal amend al fawtes,
And I trust arme vs for al assautes.
Wel then let vs ride in Christes holy name
If ye think it best: for I am yet the same
Man that I was perst for al the myre,
They rode through ỹ towne lyke as wylde fyre,
Had ben new put in euery horse tayle.
And when ỹ they came to ỹ wyndmyl by ỹ sayle
Cheke Coles gan for to speake anon,

What

What way quod he, shal we ride vpon.
Wisteris where is your farme ỳ ye told of before
Alas sayd she that euer I was boze:
It maketh me sick to think on the foule way
That we must pas throw, what should I moze say
A lane there is betwene vs and that
The Poxter of hel I dare say with his bat
Cannot escape but he must ligge in the myre,
But we wyl doe well. I wot what is our hyre.
To Hatfeld we shal ride this same night,
And to mozow when we haue the day light
We shal yede to S: Albons by than it is noone:
And my beſynes there, wil not be don soone.
It wyll cost vs two oz thzee dayes wark.
But syzs quod she, is none of you a clark:
I must haue a quytance made foz my rent
To a knaue which me soze repent:
That euer he occupyed any ground of mine,
I am sure he hath of Oxen and kyne
An hundzed heds: and much stuffe beſyde
And ỳ arrand knaue whē I com he wil him hyde
Walking him as bare as a byzds tayle,
And when I speake with him he wyl not fayle
To tel me a tale kinching and pinching.
And in faith Wisteris I haue no goed thing.
To make you chere: but it doth me good to se you.
But if I could tell in what wise and how
To auoyd the heynard, he should not long abyde.
Well sayd Cotes what so euer betyde,
This same present night I wyll ryde
To S. Albons: I lyke not this tittell tattel.
Why quod she, and ye think your hoꝛse be able

To beare you through, than do as ye lyst
But I pray you that you bring me first:
To Hatfelde, and than ye shal haue a token
To my seruant that dwelleth in my Inne,
With the crosse keyes in S. Albones towne:
And to morow in the morning, vp and downe
Ye may se mine house, and my easment there,
And afterwards trusse together al my gere
You shal haue in ỹ parlour next tor ye strete
A Coser standyng at my beds feete:
In which Coser all my money is,
Three Hundred Marks, I haue therein i wys
In lire bags, but loke that ye beare
But two of ỹ lest w you, for I haue certain geare
In the tother tower, which shal not as yet,
Be seene of any body: I let you wyt:
Ye may say that I trust ye, to let you com so nere
Shew Thomas Edwards my seruant there
Where I am and that I sent you thither,
Commandyng him for his deliuer.
My keyes to you: by such a token
The which keyes were made to open
The new chest at mine owne beds feete
And eke my Whych that is fast shyt:
Wherein remayneth all my plate
Trusse it surely: and yet beside al that
I pray ye that ye wyll take so much payne
At that ye se no lyklyhood of rayne
As to bring with you vnto this towne,
A Kyrtle of chamblet and my rawny Gowne:
They ly on the pielle in my owne chamber,
My purse also, with my Beades of amber.

Take

Take these things I pray you, as fast as ye may,
Make a tardie therof and send them away,
By Thomas Edwards to the Lyon in Barnet,
And when ye have thus don, remember this yet.
Take two freth Geldings out of my stable,
And leaue yours there, till they be better able
To iourney on the way: Syrs say I not well:
yes sayd Cotes, if it be as you tell.
At the Checker in Hatfelde, she toke her lodgeing
When it was full late in the euening.
There her Host and Cotes departed her fro
And also as fast, as their horses can go
They ryde tyl they come to S. Albons towne
And there demaunded vp and downe
For the crosse keyes and found it at last:
Thomas Edwards there they asked for in hast
And than was none such in all the throwfare
That hoze quod Cotes euyll mote he fare
Hath begiled vs, and what remidy now.
His felow answered I shal tel thee how
Peraduenture ther ar more crosse keyes then one
Aske ye som body, and ye shal know anone.
The hostler told them ꝑ there was yet an other
I thank you sayd Cotes my owne good brother.
There they demaunded as they dyd before
The goodman asked where they were bore:
And what they wolde haue, that time of night:
Quod Cotes to his felow let vs downe light
This is the house I wot well know,
Maister Edwards, I pray you tel vs how
That ye liue here in your maisters absence
Maisters quod he: Syrs get you fast hence.

For by our Lady ye be falce knaues bot h.
And then he gan to sweare many an oth.
Soft & tayre sayd Cotes, breake not your pacience
We shal tel you what we ar & whence:
Such a gentilwoman sent vs, & she her selfe sayd
That this house is her own, her husband for it paid
A ha, I wot now wher abouts ẏ ye be
By coks wounds she is an arrant hore quod he
She sent hether win. xii. monthes & little more,
After this same facion, I am sure halfe a score.
But fyrs I shal tel you it is wisdom ye take heed
Cotes in all the hast raght to him his steed
His Jade I would say, & his selow his also,
And forth they ryd wout words mo
To Hatfeld agayne by one of the clock
And at the checker dore they gan for to knock.
The goodman was yet vp, & the wydow also,
What quod she, how happeneth that you two
Com agayne so late, had you no better chere
Hore, hore, by coks blood euen here,
Sayd Cotes and it were not for shame:
I should canvas thee, and make thee lame.
Peace quod his felow, art ẏ wel in thy wit,
Thou wilt mar al, I pray thee downe sit:
And hold thy tong, the deuyll pul it out,
The wydow answerd, nay I put you out of dout
My seruant is subtil ẏ kepeth there my house.
By gods foote quod Cotes, not a poore louse
Thou art not able to foster in all the towne.
Tut sayd she, haue ye brought wt you my gown
And mine other geare tell me truely?
Than her host answered soberly

And told her all how they had sped.
  Well then quod she, let vs go to bed
And to morow I will my selfe thither
And eke you two shall ride together:
I trow ye shal heare an other maner of tale.
  Goodman of the house borow me a male
Against to morow, I pray you hartely
And mayden make redy my breakfast early.
I se wel that my men be halfe in dispayre.
  Then to bed they got them wel and fayre.
Cotes and his felow gaue in charge,
To the goodman of the house ꝑ he at large
Ne should suffer in any wise that night,
The wydow to walke til it be day light
For we doubt quod they, ꝑ she wil make a start
  They host bad them be mery in hart
And take no thought for ought that may fall
I will se you quod he agreed all
Or euer ye depart this house fro
If ye wyl be resonable, I can no mo.
  Then imediatly they yede to rest
The wydow thought she would do her best,
Once yet to begile them both twayne.
  To her hoste she gan for to complaine
with wepingeyne she sayd alas:
Help host now, thus standeth the case,
One of these knaues wold haue my wyfe
And in sorow with him to leade my lyfe,
I haue deuised all the wayes that I may
To scape from them and to go away:
But I cannot and I should ye therfore.
  The blessed Jesu that of a mayd was bore

By myne ayde as I entend well,
Therwith she wept and on her knees fell.
Than her host asked what she wolde geue,
On that condition she might haue leue
To walk at her wyll whether she wolde.
Three Grots quod she in fayre pence ito lde
And that is all that euer I haue,
At this tyme vpon me so god me saue.
The money he receyued, and then bad her goe
Whether she wold: but doe no more soe.
At three of the clocke in the dark mornyng.
Away she yed before the dawning.
And where she become then that tyde,
I cannot tell you in al this world so wyde:
But farewell frost syth that she be gon.
Cotes and his felow in the morning whan
They were vp rysen, and kempt their heaire
For the wydow they asked: & than was there
No body could tel whither she was yede,
Their host they demanded: and he sayd by crede
He wyst not where she was let her go
Quod he then: it is well ye skaped so.
One loked on an other, & wist not what to say.
And in conclusion euen the right way
To London they tooke in all the haste,
They wolde not once tarry, to breake their faste:
And of this prosses I make an ende,
God saue the wydow, where euer she wende.

CEINIS. by Walter Smith.

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